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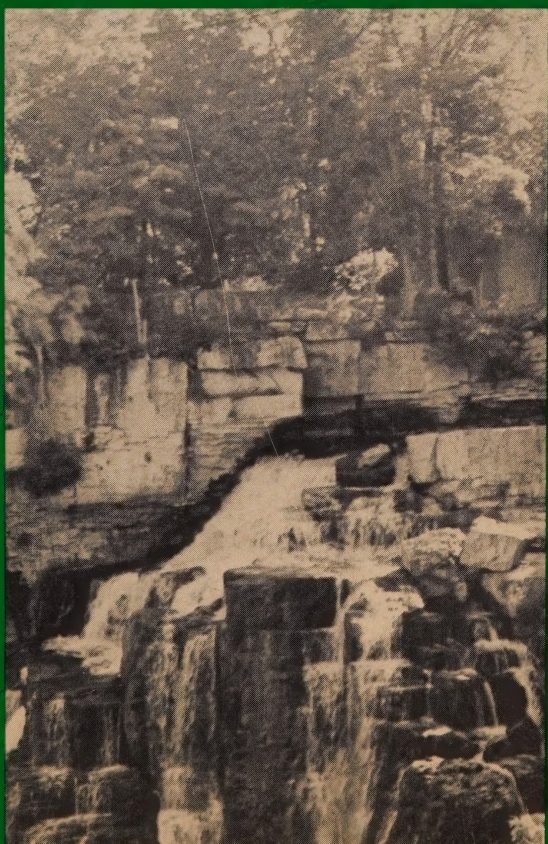
HOW DO WE MANAGE THE NIAGARA SCARPMENT?

Government
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Ontario Task Force

Niagara Escarpment Task Force



INTRODUCTION

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The Niagara Escarpment is one of Ontario's most precious and widely used natural resources.

It is a unique environmental corridor stretching for 465 miles from Queenston, near Niagara Falls, across the rich agricultural lands and expanding urban belt of Southern Ontario, and reaching the tip of the Bruce Peninsula near Tobermory.

It is a mosaic of natural delights with forests, cliffs, hills, waterfalls, streams, scenic viewpoints, unusual rock formations, and interesting plant and animal life.

It is an attribute that attracts the naturalist... the hiker... the skier... the angler... the camper... the artist... the ecologist... the urbanite who wants to get away from it all.

In its southern sections, the Escarpment is the source of a multi-million dollar extractive industry — sand and gravel, clay and shale, crushed stone and building stone.

The Escarpment's continuity also cuts through many jurisdictions — nine counties, eight conservation authorities, 31 planning boards, and 63 local municipalities.

These and other factors point to the need for coordinated planning to preserve the Escarpment's distinct characteristics and ensure a balance of interests for future use.

This is where you can help.

The Ontario Government has appointed a Task Force to hold a series of open meetings, to hear verbal submissions and receive written briefs and letters, on how you think the Niagara Escarpment should be managed for future public and private use.

This booklet is designed to provide brief background for these meetings.

S. J. Clasky, Chair.

THE GERTLER REPORT

In March, 1967, the Government of Ontario announced a wide-ranging study of the Niagara Escarpment.

A professional group of planners and geographers was established to undertake the necessary research. Professor Leonard O. Gertler, of the University of Waterloo, was commissioned to direct the study.

The result, in June, 1968, was the Niagara Escarpment Conservation and Recreation Report — the Gertler Report.

MEANS OF PRESERVATION

The Gertler Report recommended three complementary means for preserving Escarpment land for recreational, scenic or general environmental purposes:

1. Complete Control — through outright public purchase of the land.
2. Selective Control — through the acquisition of defined rights in the land by such means as easement and leasing.
3. Regulatory Environmental Control — through land use regulations, such as zoning by-laws.

The Report recommended the controls be implemented, in stages, within an eight-year period.

ACRES AFFECTED

Of the 1.2 million acres studied, the Gertler Report recommended that 90,000 acres (7%) be placed under Complete or Selective Controls and 300,000 acres (25%) under land-use regulations.

THE PARKLAND SYSTEM

To preserve, plan and develop the Escarpment as a parkland network, the Gertler Report recommended four major components:

- (a) The location of major multi-purpose parks at the Niagara Parkway, Effingham Short Hills, Dundas Valley, Rattlesnake Point, Credit Forks, Blue Mountain, Beaver Valley, Cape Croker Indian Reserve, and Tobermory.
- (b) The preservation of many feature areas — waterfalls, viewpoints, historic sites, rock formations, etc.

- (c) The protection of the scarp (defined as the rock face, contour, slope, soils and forest cover) as a permanent feature of the Ontario landscape.
- (d) The establishment of a circulation system linking parks, features, and scarp in a manner which is in harmony with the natural parkland concept. The Report recognized the importance of the Bruce Trail in this respect.

THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY

Regarding quarrying activities, the Report recommended that provincial standards be set to regulate extraction. These standards would include a licensing system, site redevelopment plans (including uses during and after extraction), the posting of performance bonds to guarantee the carrying out of site redevelopment plans, and zoning areas where extractive operations would be permitted.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

The Report recommended amendments to be made to relevant Ontario legislation to ensure the preservation of the Escarpment. It also urged that official plans by municipalities be prepared with this aim in view and that a Secretariat be established to coordinate these activities.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Ontario Government accepted the principles of the Gertler Report but did not adopt all of the recommendations.

On September 28th, 1971, Prime Minister William Davis announced that the Government intended "to proceed in a more vigorous way to acquire additional land for recreation and related uses along the Niagara Escarpment."

Mr. Davis said that the Government will designate during the next five years a substantial proportion of the Province's Recreational Land Acquisition Program Fund to the purchase of Escarpment property.

The Prime Minister commented: "The Government, which had previously accepted the basic philosophies set out by the Niagara Escarpment Report, has now instigated action towards meeting the principal objectives and recommendations."

GOVERNMENT ACTIONS SINCE THE GERTLER REPORT

Since the Gertler Report, The Ontario Government has acted to preserve the Niagara Escarpment. Here is a summary of what has happened:

LAND ACQUISITIONS

The Province has directly acquired 17,000 acres, costing about \$4.6 million, bringing its total park holdings on the Escarpment at March 31 this year to about 20,000 acres.

Working with conservation authorities, 6,000 acres, costing about \$2 million, have been acquired. Conservation authorities now hold over 10,000 acres in the Escarpment area.

The Province contributes 75 percent towards purchases by conservation authorities (prior to the Gertler Report it contributed 50 percent). The remaining 25 percent is normally raised by the authorities and many concerned individuals, groups and organizations have provided funds. For example, high school students in the Hamilton area have raised about \$17,000 during the past two years.

More than 30,000 acres of the Niagara Escarpment area are now held in public trust as a result of these two acquisition approaches.

EASEMENTS

The Province and conservation authorities have been actively negotiating easement rights. Notable examples involve Hamilton, Sauble and North Grey Region Conservation Authorities, which have secured easement rights providing public access across private property as part of the Bruce Trail. These easements, made available on a voluntary basis, form a critical trail linkage between lands held by conservation authorities.

OFFICIAL PLANS

Certain municipalities, in cooperation with the Province, have incorporated Escarpment preservation principles in their Official

Plans. One example is the Owen Sound Official Plan. Another is the Beaver Valley Official Plan, where six municipalities have included the basic objectives of the Gertler Report in their joint Official Plan.

SUBDIVISION CONTROLS

In 1970, the Province placed subdivision control on eleven Escarpment area municipalities without such regulation. This action was in line with the Gertler Report recommendations.

PITS AND QUARRIES

In June, 1970, The Niagara Escarpment Protection Act became law, implementing most of the Gertler Report's recommendations on pits and quarries.

Permits were required to operate on the Escarpment or within a specified zone that was 13 miles wide in places. Site development plans had to be filed, dealing with conditions of operation and rehabilitation. The quarrying of the actual dolomite face of the Escarpment was prohibited.

A total of 164 permits for existing operations was issued. Few permits were issued for new operations (mostly small farm pits or wayside pits).

In July, 1971, the Pits and Quarries Control Act was passed, considerably strengthening these and other regulations. Operators were required to make a yearly performance deposit with the Treasurer of Ontario.

The siting of all new operations is under the initial control of the municipalities along the Escarpment. The Minister of Natural Resources can veto a new licence, even if the municipality has approved the location of a pit or quarry, if he believes the activity is against the public interest.

THE NEXT STEP

These are examples of Government actions implementing some of the Gertler Report recommendations.

As a further step, the Government has set up a Task Force to talk to the people, collect their views on remaining issues, and recommend action to the Government.

REMAINING ISSUES

How, for example, should the Province use the techniques recommended by the Gertler Report — Complete Control, Selective Control and Environmental Land-Use Controls?

Does one deserve more emphasis than the others? Should the Province acquire all Escarpment land? What about the local, as against provincial, viewpoint — which technique would serve best?

COMPLETE CONTROL

Accepting that land acquisition means the purchase of private land in the public interest, the following issues arise:

- How should local municipalities be compensated for tax revenue losses?
- What is the Provincial responsibility for the provision of parkland for urban populations?
- How can a proper land price be determined for public purchase?
- Under what conditions should expropriation powers be used?
- When the Province designates land for public purchase, should it be obliged to buy the land immediately if the owner is willing to sell?
- How should public acquisitions be financed — local fund-raising, bond issues, specific taxes, Provincial general revenue?

SELECTIVE CONTROL

The principal technique is the purchase of easement rights to ensure public access to the Escarpment or the preservation of scenic or historic features. Relevant issues are:

- How suitable are easements as a method of preservation?
- How should an easement purchase price be determined?
- Who should hold the title to an easement — municipality, county, province, conservation authority?
- What rights should be contained in an easement agreement?
- How are easement conditions to be maintained and controlled?
- Under what conditions should leasing agreements be negotiated?

ENVIRONMENTAL LAND-USE CONTROLS

The principle of this technique is public land-use controls, such as zoning by-laws, over privately owned property.

- Should the entire Escarpment be placed under direct Provincial land-use controls?
- What lands should be included for control in the Niagara Escarpment Area?
- What types of land-uses should be permitted, under what conditions, and where?
- Should provincial responsibility be that of setting a land-use framework to which local authorities must conform, but providing some flexibility for local autonomy?
- Should interim land-use controls be imposed now?

THE TASK FORCE

On May 1st, 1972, the Ontario Government announced the appointment of a Task Force on the Niagara Escarpment, with the following terms of reference:

- “— To develop overall priorities to be used in the acquisition of land by the Province and its agencies;
- To advise on all proposed land acquisitions by the Province and its agencies;
- To establish land-use and development standards and to examine various methods of land-use control and to recommend a system which will ensure the appropriate use of lands;
- To advise upon all proposals which would result in major changes in existing land-use patterns.”

The Task Force has been asked to report by October 1st this year.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The Task Force consists of:

- Chairman — S.J. Clasky, Director, Regional Development Branch,
Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental
Affairs.
- Members — L.H. Eckel, Director, Lands and Waters Branch, Ministry
of Natural Resources
- Dr. D.F. Hewitt, Chief, Industrial Minerals Section,
Ministry of Natural Resources
- P. Klopchic, Director, Travel Research Branch, Ministry
of Industry and Tourism
- C.A. Louis, Plans Administration Branch, Ministry of
Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs
- M.A. Mogford, Cabinet Office
- N.D. Patrick, Director, Conservation Authorities
Branch, Ministry of Natural Resources
- V.W. Rudik, Strategic Planning Branch, Ministry of the
Environment
- Secretary — J.O. Spender, Regional Development Branch, Ministry
of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Task Force would like to hear your view and opinions.

You can aid us in a number of ways:

- Speak to the Task Force at one of a series of public meetings
being held this summer in Milton, Hamilton, St. Catharines,
Orangeville, Collingwood and Owen Sound.
- Attend the public meetings and write your comments on special
cards which will be available for this purpose.
- Prepare a brief or a letter and send it to the Task Force
Secretary.
- Arrange a special meeting for your group or organization with
the Task Force.

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THE TASK FORCE WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU.

For further information on the public meetings and procedures for submissions contact:

Mr. J.O. Spender, Secretary of the Niagara Escarpment Task Force, c/o Regional Development Branch,

Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs,
Queen's Park, Toronto.

Telephone: 965-2773

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT TASK FORCE

c/o Regional Development Branch

880 Bay Street, Toronto

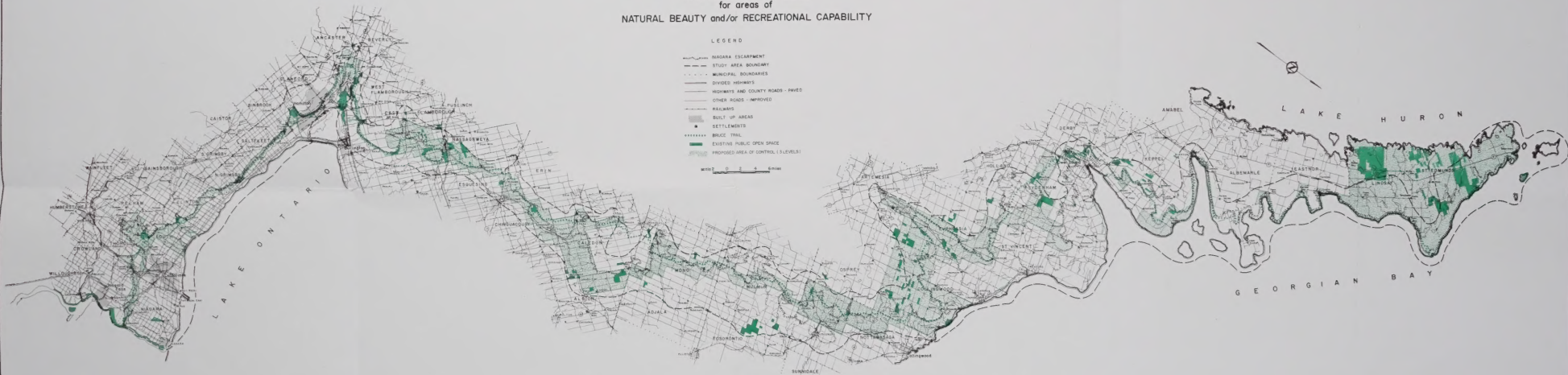


PRESERVATION PROPOSALS
for areas of
NATURAL BEAUTY and/or RECREATIONAL CAPABILITY

LEGEND

- NIAGARA ESCARPMENT
- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
- - - MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES
- DIVIDED HIGHWAYS
- HIGHWAYS AND COUNTY ROADS - PAVED
- OTHER ROADS - IMPROVED
- RAILWAYS
- BUILT UP AREAS
- SETTLEMENTS
- BRUCE TRAIL
- EXISTING PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
- PROPOSED AREA OF CONTROL (3 LEVELS)

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